24 February 2026

> “We accept the NDIA’s offer to inform us. We would like to offer the community’s offer to inform the NDIA”.

What we talked about:

Topic 1: Recap of December meeting

The NDIA gave an update on previous actions and what happened to insights after the December meeting. This was in response to members wanting information about how their feedback is used.

A briefing for all working group members about the NDIS Support Needs Assessment (SNA) tool and participant pathway will be offered on 5 March 2026.

The group recognised the legacy of Nick Rushworth, group member and former CEO of Brain Injury Australia, following his recent passing.

What we heard from members:

- It’s important that people have time to talk, ask questions and understand the information at the 5 March briefing.
- Pre-reading or a copy of the slides before the session would help everyone prepare and take part meaningfully.

Members can send their questions to the Co-design team before the briefing. There will be time to talk about the briefing at the next working group meeting in late March or early April.

Topic 2: Where are we now and work plan in 2026

The NDIA talked about ways that the community is having a say on new framework planning:

1. Legislation (following community feedback in the NDIS Review)
2. NDIS Rules (Public consultation is open from 23 January until 6 March 2026)
3. New Framework Planning co-design and participant pathway experience
4. The NDIA Design Hub.

The NDIA talked about current validating of the SNA with participants in the Design Hub. The validating is looking at things like participant experience, accessibility, safety, staff skills, and how to make the process more consistent and high quality.

The NDIA talked about possible opportunities for the group in 2026, including:

- Giving advice on who should take part in future validating and design work
- Helping shape training materials for frontline staff
- Advice to support continuous improvement when the new planning framework begins.

What we heard from members:

- Members said meetings need more time for real conversation and discussion.
- Some members shared concerns about the NDIS SNA tool. They are worried it may not be culturally appropriate and the process could create power imbalances. Members want clearer and more open communication about the SNA tool.
- Members said participants should be able to review their SNA report before their plan is approved. This could help prevent unnecessary reviews and build trust in the process.

Topic 3: Workshop – providing evidence in exceptional circumstances

In small groups, members looked at different examples of when a participant might be asked to provide additional evidence in the new way of planning.

What we heard from members:

- Information about evidence should be given early and written in plain English.
- Messaging about ‘additional evidence’ needs to be clear – what it means, when it is needed, and what level of detail or report is required.
- The current messaging should be more specific, so participants don’t feel pressured to collect evidence they may not need.
- The NDIA should share what information is already in a participant’s file before asking for more evidence. This helps avoid people having to repeat their stories or find reports again.
- Collecting evidence can take months so a preparation call a few days before the SNA does not feel helpful.
- Participants in rural and remote areas may face further barriers if they cannot access support to gather evidence.
- Being told a participant may need to redo their SNA if new evidence is provided later can cause confusion and stress.
- People will usually want to give the NDIA extra evidence, even if the NDIA hasn’t asked for it.
- The NDIA needs to be upfront with the community about whether external evidence will actually be looked at, and in what situations.
- Participants with complex needs should be matched with assessors who have the right qualifications and experience to understand those needs. For example, risks related to meal management should be expected and planned for.

- It would be better to complete the SNA first. If evidence for a specific support is needed, the NDIA should provide time and funding to gather this additional evidence.
- Participants should be able to get written follow-up after a phone call. This gives a clear record of what was discussed and what they need to do next.
- NDIA staff should be able to recognise complex needs, understand different disability types, and be aware of their own biases.
- A simple list or webpage about evidence would be helpful. It could include:
  - When extra evidence might be required
  - What types of reports are needed and what ‘good’ evidence looks like
  - Who can provide evidence
  - Templates or guidance for allied health professionals.

Who we met with

Participants, Disability Representative and Carer Organisations, Independent Advisory Council and Reference Group members, subject matter experts and NDIA staff.

Action arising from the meeting

Team responsible:

NDIA Co-design Branch

Action items:

- Confirm dates for upcoming meetings and send placeholder calendar invites
- Collate questions in advance before the NDIS SNA tool and participant pathway briefing on 5 March 2026
- Send pre-reading material for the 5 March briefing to group members
- Include an agenda item for the next working group meeting to discuss the 5 March briefing.

Related articles

Participant Safeguarding Co-design Working Group meeting February 2026

Date
17 February 2026

Participant Pathway Experience Co-design Working Group Meeting 16 December 2025

Date
16 December 2025
Category

- Participant Reference Group communique

Participant Reference Group Meeting summary – 17 and 18 September 2024

Date
24 January 2025
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